

the integrity of Social Security and Medicare in the 21st century when the baby boomers retire. That's really the issue. Social Security right now is secure through 2029. We just added 10 more years to the Medicare Trust Fund. The issue is, how can we preserve the integrity of these programs and the benefits they bring in a century when people are going to be living longer and when the baby boomers will retire and there will be just barely more than two people working for every person retired. We've never dealt with an issue like this without a crisis before, but the bottom line is, if we make modest changes now, we can avoid imposing drastic changes that our children will have to make later. I think the responsible thing to do is to deal with the modest changes now. So I hope we will do that.

And finally, in October the First Lady and I are going to have a big conference on child care. I am still—I think “obsessed” is not too strong a word—with the challenges so many Americans face succeeding in raising their children and succeeding at work. And there is still not a systematic network of child care out there. We have gotten a lot of help from the Congress in establishing child care networks for people who will be moving from welfare to work, and

that's good. But there are a lot of people who have never been on welfare who work for modest wages, whose children simply do not have access to quality, affordable child care. And I think that's one of the next big frontiers in our efforts to bring America together.

So I hope you will help us with that, and I hope you will follow it. And I hope you will be proud of the fact that you have supported us and you have made possible the best economy we've had in a generation and progress on all these social issues and progress abroad as well as at home. That's what the political process is supposed to do. And if we can keep going and do this flatout for 3 more years, I think we can watch our country move into a new century and a new millennium, confident that the best days of America are still ahead. And that is our obligation as citizens and as human beings.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:09 p.m. in the East Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee.

## Remarks on Diabetes Initiatives August 8, 1997

Thank you very much. I would like to thank Dr. Wiesel and all the people here at the Georgetown Medical Center for hosting us. I want to thank Mary Delaney and Chief Joyce Dugan and Sandra Puczynski for their speeches and for their example. As you might imagine, over the course of my tenure I have had occasion to come to quite a number of ceremonies like this. I don't believe I have ever heard three people back to back speak so powerfully, so clearly, so eloquently about a matter of great national concern. And I think we should give them all another hand. *[Applause]*

I'd like to thank all of the people who are here today, diabetes patients, families, activists, and advocates. Especially I'd like to acknowledge the people on the platform: Stephen Satalino, the chair of the American Diabetes

Association. Joan Beaubaire, the former head of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, is also here. Her son works for me at the White House, so I get a little extra prodding on this from time to time. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Mary Tyler Moore, who has awakened the conscience of our Nation and indeed the entire world about this issue, for her long and tireless and selfless efforts. Thank you, Mary.

I want to thank Dr. Phillip Gorden, the head of diabetes research at NIH. He's here with us today. And the NIH will play a major role in the work that we are discussing here.

None of us could write the history of the century that is about to end without a big chapter on the miracles modern medicine and science have wrought in our lives. Polio, mumps,

diphtheria, the diseases that robbed so many families of beloved infants and toddlers for centuries have been virtually eradicated. Premature babies who just a decade ago would not have had a chance at life beyond the intensive care unit are growing into happy and healthy children. Powerful treatments are prolonging the lives and improving the quality of lives of people with HIV and AIDS all across our country, raising new hopes for people living with the disease.

But there are still frontiers to conquer and still too many among us whose lives and futures are dimmed by disease and illness, as we have heard so powerfully today. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in our country and perhaps equally profoundly affects the lives of millions and millions of people who have it every day.

The historic balanced budget legislation I signed on Tuesday is about more than balancing the books; it also honors our values, increases our chances of keeping the American dream alive in the 21st century, and improves the lives of every American. There are some little-known but very important provisions in this new balanced budget that will take us a tremendous step forward in our fight against diabetes. These investments total more than \$2 billion over the next 5 years. They will strengthen our efforts to find a cure, to help our most vulnerable citizens better manage the disease, to prevent some of its most traumatic, costly, and life-threatening complications.

These investments represented the committed efforts of many Members of Congress and our administration. But I must recognize especially two: first, Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse, whose daughter is here and who has diabetes, led the bipartisan congressional diabetes caucus in an absolutely tireless fight to include the Medicare investments that are in this bill. And I thank her. She has done magnificently. Thank you.

And I must tell you, I wish very much that the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, could be with us today. When we have a disagreement, it is normally well publicized—[laughter]—and widely understood. [Laughter] But I wish the American people could see the numerous private conversations that we have had together in quiet rooms about diabetes.

He watched his mother-in-law live with diabetes and became a great champion for people struggling with it, a tireless advocate for greater

investments in research, prevention, and care, and one of the very first people who ever spoke to me not only about the human dimensions of the disease but the enormous percentage of our public funds in Medicare and, to a lesser extent, in Medicaid, that could be devoted to other purposes were it not for the crushing burden of diabetes-related problems directly resultant from our failure to invest as we begin to invest today. I know he played a leading role in making these new initiatives a part of the budget, and I appreciate both what he and Elizabeth and others have done.

Now, this new legislation will do three things. It expands Medicare benefits for the more than 3 million senior citizens diagnosed with diabetes. Mary talked about that. We all know that early investments in prevention can save us millions in expensive treatments down the line. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to devastating complications such as blindness, amputations, and kidney disease. This new benefit will make testing strips and other methods of monitoring blood glucose levels, as well as instructions on how best to manage the complicated disease, available to all Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes. It will empower Medicare patients to take better care of themselves at home and to avoid complications that can lead to costly hospital stays and destroy health.

Second, the new legislation will enable Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to boost funding for Type I or juvenile diabetes research by \$150 million over the next 5 years. Nearly one million Americans have Type I diabetes, and as many as half of them are children. Even when the disease is managed carefully, the patients almost always experience further complications. That's why we cannot rest until we find a cure that will free our children from this disease. And this unprecedented grant will help us to do that.

Third, we will provide a 5-year, \$150 million grant to the Indian Health Service for diabetes prevention, research, and treatment in our Native American communities. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator Domenici of New Mexico for his special efforts on this project.

As Chief Dugan has made it clear, Native Americans are 3 times as likely as white Americans to have this disease; far less likely to find adequate treatment for it. Too many Native

Americans are suffering from the grimmest complications of diabetes. This grant will bring public health services, schools, and nutrition programs together to reach children and families living on reservations and to provide them with the information and tools to prevent and manage diabetes.

And I might say, I told Chief Dugan before I came up here that my grandmother's grandmother was a Cherokee who would be very proud that there is a woman chief who is doing such a magnificent job. [Applause] Thank you.

Next month our scientists at NIH will be hosting a workshop to bring researchers from all across the country to share ideas and discuss the most promising avenues of diabetes research. And we will establish a new and unprecedented public-private partnership to bring our Nation's leading health care providers, purchasers, and consumers together to develop uniform guidelines for diabetes care. Through the guidelines, we can ensure that all doctors provide their patients with thorough and vigilant care, such as regular eye and foot exams, to stay as healthy as possible.

Taken together, these initiatives can make life-changing differences for millions of Americans. I was very heartened to hear the American Diabetes Association say that these new investments in diabetes are as important for people with diabetes as the discovery of insulin in 1921. Let us pray that it will be so.

Let me finally say that discussing this in rather clinical terms cannot possibly convey the human impact that Sandra did in talking about her child. On the way over here today, I was remembering that 23 years ago plus, now, when I began my career in political life, the first chairman of my campaign was only a year older than me and was already a bank president at the age of 28 or 29, but he died a few years ago from complications from diabetes. When I lived in Arkansas, I used to sing in a church

choir with a man who had to quit singing because of complications from diabetes, and I have these vivid memories every Sunday of standing there looking at him sitting in the church with the pain on his face of not being able to do it anymore.

This morning I got a note from a friend of mine I'd like to read to you. "For the last 17 years my son has gone to sleep scared, scared that his blood sugar would drop and his body would be ripped apart with a diabetic seizure. Every day for the last 17 years, my son and his family have worried about the opposite effects of having his blood sugar remain at too high a level and thereby causing the early onset of blindness, heart failure, and loss of limb. Until today, there simply wasn't enough money available for scientific research to have a real hope to find a cure. Now there is."

It is easy to say that in the last 50 years we experienced in science the age of physics, the age of space travel, and the beginning of genetic research but that in the next 50 years, the 21st century in science will be an age of biology. The important thing is that for people and their families with diabetes, it can be an age of longer, happier, richer lives.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the auditorium at Georgetown University Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sam W. Wiesel, executive vice president for health sciences, Georgetown University Medical Center; Mary Delaney, a local resident who suffers from diabetes; Chief Joyce Dugan of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; Sandra Puczynski of Ohio, whose daughter suffers from diabetes; David Beaubaire, White House Special Assistant to the Cabinet Secretary and Director of Surrogate Scheduling; and actress Mary Tyler Moore, international chairman, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International.

## The President's Radio Address August 9, 1997

*The President.* Good morning, Vice President Gore has joined me today to talk to you about what we're doing to reduce smoking, especially

by young people, and to protect Americans from the potential threat of secondhand tobacco smoke.